

Echoes
From
Nantucket's Oldest House.

Entr of house here

Brill - 1686.

By
Anna Starbuck Jenks
(Custodian)

Published by The Standard Printing Co.
Boston. 1904.

Copyrighted by
Anna Starbuck Jenks 1904.

Dedication

To Mrs Tristram Coffin, of
Poughkeepsie, N. Y. — the present
owner of "Nantucket's Oldest House",
this little book is gratefully
dedicated by the author:

Anna Starbuck Jenks.
(Custodian)

Contents.

~~Chapter I.~~
~~Early Settlement of Nantucket.~~

~~Chapter II.~~
~~The Oldest House.~~

~~Chapter III. III~~
~~Visitors to The Oldest House.~~

~~Chapter IV. IIII~~
~~Early and Later Days.~~

~~Chapter V. II.~~
~~Glimpses Through The Horse-Shoe~~
~~Chimney.~~

~~Chapter VI. IV.~~
~~An Idyl of The Sea.~~
~~(A true incident)~~

Chapter I.

Early Settlement of Nantucket.

An island situated thirty miles from the coast of the main-land must, from the nature of things, have a distinctive individuality and a history all its own. Such a history and such a strong personality has the "lone little island" of Nantucket.

It is not intended to elaborate that history in the pages of this little book, but only to give a brief introductory outline.

As early as the year 1641 Thomas Chapman, a merchant living at Waterbury, had control of all the islands lying south of Massachusetts; he having purchased them from Lord Sterling in

that year. Mayhew in turn sold the island of Nantucket in 1659 to nine purchasers, viz: Tristram Coffin, Thomas Macy, Christopher Hussey, Richard Swain, Thomas Barnard, Peter Coffin, Stephen Greenleaf, John Swain, and William Pike; the consideration therefor being "thirty pounds sterling and two beaver hats".

In September or October following the recording of the deed of sale, the little band of first settlers, consisting of Thomas Macy and family, Edward Starbuck and family, James Coffin and Isaac Coleman set sail in an open boat from Salisbury, Mass. in search of their new possessions and to establish a home where they could worship

God "according to the dictates of their own conscience". They were afterwards joined by John and Richard Garstner, Peter Folger, Tristram Coffin and family and others. They were a brave little colony, few in numbers but stout of heart and determined to overcome all obstacles and to make ere long a home of comfort, bloom and beauty out of this erstwhile "sand heap of the sea". So with a holy purpose and Caesarian courage they came, they saw, they overcame.

Previous to the landing of these first white settlers the island was inhabited by several Indian tribes, numbering in all about three thousand. The Indians, however were

very friendly, and had a
 bright fire burning upon the
 beach, where they gathered to
 welcome the little boat-load
 of adventurers, and to extend
 their primitive hospitality
 to the new-comers. This tender
 of friendship on the part of the
 Indians was never abused by
 our ancestors, and peaceful
 relations ever after existed be-
 tween the white people and the
 "red-skins". Indeed the exam-
 ple of Nantucket, like that
 of Wm Penn, in treating with the
 Indians, might well have been
 followed in other sections of
 our country and thus much
 cruel blood-shed have been spared.
 The new-comers were so honorable
 that, in addition to having already

paid the thirty pounds sterling and two beaver hats" to Thomas Mayhew for his legal right to the whole island, they also paid each Indian for his individual, moral right to the land, as it was gradually acquired by the new "proprietors"; and surveyed and marked off by Peter Folger, who was one of the original first settlers, and the grandfather of Benjamin Franklin.

In these days of comfort and abundance it is hard to realize the difficulties and hardships with which the brave Pioneer Colony of 1661. had to contend in founding and building their simple homes in the little town of Sherborne as the first

settlement was called. They located this first village south-east of Capanum Pond, near the Wannacomet Pond in the year 1661. Antiquarian experts can still read the language of the peculiar depressions in the ground of that section, and translate them as having been the former cellars of Elisham Coffin's house and that of Stephen Tison, and of others. The house of Edward Starbuck was on the land now known as the Cornish farm. The ancient town records substantiate also the fact that Sherborne was first located at Capanum, instead of at Madaket as erroneously stated by some local historians. The house

at first were very small and crudely built from such scant material as they could gather upon the island; but, with the friendly assistance of the Indians, they gradually built up a little hamlet of about thirty houses, in that secluded section. In after years, however, as their numbers as well as their possessions increased, they realized the superior advantages of the present harbor, and so by degrees they changed their abode, even moving some of the houses, and notably the old North Vestry, their first "meeting-house", down to the present site, where they nestled securely as the nucleus of the town of Nantucket of future world.

wide fame.

Their first pursuits were fishing and agriculture; and, like all pioneers, they experienced, during those first twenty-five years of island life, a preponderating share of hardships and privations. But, fortunately, their health was rugged and their courage strong. There, far out at sea; away from the dear home scenes and home comforts of their native England, they lived indeed the *Palm of Life*; and their very hearts beat throbbled with the spirit of the, then unwritten, line:

"Life is real; life is earnest".

Chapter 77

9.

The Oldest House.

On Sunset Hill, off of West Centre Street, in the north west part of the town of Nantucket, there stands to-day a weather-beaten land-mark, known as "The Jethro Coffin House", and also as "The Horse-Shoe House" (the latter name on account of the large brick horse-shoe in bas relief on the outside of the ancient and original chimney). It is the oldest house now remaining on the island, and has withstood the storms, and the "tooth of Time" for two hundred and ^{nineteen} ~~eighty~~ years at the date of this writing in 190~~5~~⁵. It was built in 1686 and at that time was "a thing of beauty", and, from its

massive timbers, and solid construction, bade fair to be "a jay forever."

The little town of Sherborne (as Nantucket town was first called) was now twenty-five years of age; had passed its majority, as it were, and the people had begun to prosper and to add to their comforts by imports from the mainland. This house, therefore, was intended to outshine all others previously constructed. It was the fond scheme of Peter Coffin (son of the first Tristram Coffin) and John Gardner — the parents, respectively of Jethro Coffin and Mary Gardner; a youth of twenty-three and a maiden of fifteen, who were about to wed.

Old John Gardner owned a

large tract of land on Sunset Hill, and he set off about an acre of it as the site of the new home and gave it to his daughter as his half of the bridal present, while Peter Coffin, not to be outdone in fatherly generosity, and who owned forests and a lumber mill in Exeter, New Hampshire, brought in his own sailing vessel the solid timbers suitably hewn and framed, and, as his half of the bridal gift had the substantial homestead built for his son Jethro and the fair young bride. And this paternal heart thrilled with honest pride as he beheld its completed reality.

The marriage of the young couple — Jethro and Mary —

was celebrated in their new home; and every family then living on the island was invited to the festivities; all being closely related by intermarriage, and all feeling a warm interest in this much-talked-of wedding outfit. It was an unusual thing at that time for a young couple to commence housekeeping in a building of their "very own." It was customary for young married people to live, at first, under the parental roof, in one or two rooms "set off" by the "old folks", until able to build for themselves and leave the home-roof for one wholly their own. So this was indeed a new departure for Jethro and Mary to celebrate their wedding and "house-warming" all in one day.

In its solid proportions and fresh new beauty; with its wide-mouthed fire-places and armed horse-shoe chimney; its long roof sloping nearly to the ground at the back as northern eaves brought, and its front windows looking "due south", according to the custom of the time; it stood indeed an imposing structure; and so far did it surpass all others yet attempted, that it was looked upon as a grand mansion, and a home where future comfort and wealth were likely to abound.

It stands to-day essentially unaltered; and with its original architecture and building materials unchanged. The heavy oaken beams running through the centre of the rooms and around the

sides, braced in the corners up-stairs by peculiar shaped buttresses called "ship's knees"; (brought-for the purpose of extra strength from the ship-building state of New-Hampshire) all to-day are as sound as when first-brought by the broad-axe and arranged into permanent place. The hand-split-laths are still on the ceiling, held in place by hand-wrought nails; while patches here and there of the original shell-plaster still cling tenaciously between the open cross-beams and tell a "twice-told tale" of the good workmanship of two centuries ago.

On either side of the little "front-entry" is a large room; the one on the east being called the "Keeping room" — as it was "kept", or set aside, as the best

room, and opened only on rare occasions; while the one on the west of the front door was the "Living-room" — a combination of dining-room, sitting-room and kitchen. Just off from the "Living-room", in the section under the long sloping roof or "lean-to" there is a smaller room, containing a very old wooden sink, and therefore called the "sink room", and adjoining this small lavatory on the right is a pantry; and on the left a tiny room about seven feet by nine which was used as the "spare room" for the "old folks" when they came to spend the night.

The "Keeping room" and the "Living room" each had immense fire-places, the one in the latter room being unaltered to-day, and in which one can stand and look

up the long open flue and catch a glimpse of the sky above like a glance from a friendly blue eye meeting one's own.

The opening of these fire-places is of peculiar design, having oval shaped jambs, or corners, instead of the usual right-angled or obtuse angled openings. Indeed we have been unable to learn of any other house in either this country or in Europe that has the oval jambs, and the inference is that it was specially designed to enhance the beauty of the Bridal Homestead.

Upstairs there were, originally, two large rooms; the one on the east side, being divided to-day, by a partition, into two small ones; but the large western room, or "bridal chamber" as it is called, remains unaltered

and is a spacious room; the master piece of the house; with an oval shaped fire-place, a great luxury for those days, and a good sized window looking out over the undulating moorlands, and whence one can catch a faint glimmer of the "ocean blue", and a perfect flood of glory from the "sunset's dying embers". It is in this room, and in fact throughout the upper part of the house, that the heavy side timbers are braced in the corners with full sized "ship's knees" exposed to view; and the walls are double, with a back-filling of clay mortar. A little clothes-press closet in this "bridal chamber" echoes to-day with a well-nigh tragic incident. The closet is now called the "Indian closet" on account

of the thrilling story connected with it.

A year or two had elapsed since the building of the house, and the young husband had gone on a sea-voyage, leaving his wife and child at home. One pleasant summer day she took her first-born infant, named Peter, and strolled across the fields to her father's house on the Cliff road, where she spent the day; returning in the twilight to her home on Sunset Hill. During her absence an Indian crept into the house, stole stealthily up the two flights of stairs and secreted himself in the large attic, intending to rob the house of any articles suiting his trinket-loving eye. But like the hare in the fable he "fell asleep by the wayside".

induced by the contents of the bottle which he carried with him. The garret was hot and redolent of drying herbs, and drowsiness overtook him ere he had secured any plunder. The long summer day wore to its close, and "Lo, the Poor Indian" slept on. As twilight deepened Mrs Coffin returned to her home, and being tired from her long walk, she ascended the stairs to the next chamber, where she rocked little Peter to sleep, sweetly crooning her lullaby song, all unconscious of the rivalry form of the formidant Indian overhead. Going down stairs at length, she lighted her sperm oil lamp, picked up the sputtering flame to new brightness with the little ivory peepake, made from

20.

a whale's tooth, that Fether
had carved; and then knit a
few "bouts" on the long, home-spun
yarn stocking that she was fashioning
for her sailor husband; counting
in with the fast-growing stitches
the flower growing record of the
lonely months since Fether sailed
away. Then dropping her knitting,
in her lap she hummed to her-
self the quaint little song:

"God pity the poor sailors),
And all who cross the seas,
What fears are theirs),
What toils, what cares,
While here we are all at ease.
May they in safety reach their port;
Nor wreck, nor danger know;
And on shore fear no more;
And on shore fear no more;

While the stormy winds do blow-o-o-w!
While the stormy winds do blow-o-o-o-w!
While the stormy winds do blow-o-o-o-w!

Growing sleepy at last, she, too, retired to rest in the room above, with little Peter's curly head nestling softly in her bosom; and soon mother and child were quietly sleeping in the silent house.

The high post bedstead in which they slept was in the corner of the room opposite the closet the door of which stood open. The chintz - or "furniture calico" - curtains with which the bed was canopied were drawn far back to admit a free circulation of the soft night-breeze that was laden with the salty flavors of the sea; and the shafts of moonlight upon the floor served as a convenient "night-lamp" for the room. In the middle of the night she was suddenly awakened

by a rumbling noise in the garret overhead, and just as she had located the sound, the loose boards of the garret floor gave way precipitating the Indian into the closet of her room. In the bright moonlight she saw him deliberately crawl out of the closet and seat himself in the corner of the fireplace opposite her bed, and threateningly sharpen his long knife on the bricks of the hearth. He was playing his little game of "bluff" to frighten her into leaving the house that the "coast might be clear" for securing the possible plunder. The brave pioneer women of that day were not given to fainting or hysterics. This young mother, although less than twenty years of age, had

a Physique and a nerve that were made up of something more substantial than from practice with a golf stick, or from dawdling over a ping-pong table. Mentally measuring the distance between her bed and the Indian and thence from the Indian to the doors leading from her room; she seized her child; leaped from her bed like a white-robed phantom of the night; fled swiftly past the glowering enemy; through the open door-way; down the crooked stairs, and out of the house; escaping across fields of under-bush to her father's home in the distance. The Indian's mandarin senses caught a consciousness of her fluttering garments as she passed the hearthstone and he tried to pursue her, but

This frequent resort to the "little brown jug" during the day, had made him incapable of navigating the crooked stairs, and he fell headlong, landing in a disabled condition on the floor of the little "front entry" below, where he was afterwards found by Mrs Coffin's father and brother and soundly punished for his attempted crime.

As we look into the "Bandian closet" to-day; where, however, the flooring of the garret above has been repaired, a temporary feeling of "the creeps" is apt to seize one; and the fertile imagination of the author of "Vagrom Verse" has gone further still and has translated to my appreciative sense a section of the dilapidated plastering on the wall near the door

of the chamber, as a filmy, but grotesque likeness of the intoxicated Indian dancing his preliminary war-dance, as the fleeing "pale face" escaped from the room.

The Coffin House to-day stands, as it stood more than two centuries ago, in an open field back from the road-way, on the brow of Sunset Hill. As an object of historic interest and curiosity it is second to none on the island. It is now kept as a relic of by-gone times and statwart living, and is exhibited annually to large numbers of summer visitors who throng its rooms with expectant faces, and who listen to its story with appreciative ears. A veritable Mecca it has become to thousands of finely attuned

souls who are fond of "looking backward". Even little children — embryo poets some of them — who have been used to only luxury and modern convenience, are yet impressed by the primitive surroundings and the subtle aroma of romance still lingering here and forming a mysterious link with the far-away past.

To the custodian of the place, in the intervals between departed and coming guests, there come moments of reverie, when the atmosphere between the seen and the unseen becomes so rarified, and unprofaned by "disturbing conditions", that the gentle heart-beats of the bride almost find an echoing throb in her own, induced by the wireless message

from the far off shore, and
reverently caught by the "receiver"
of a kindred soul of to-day.

It seems fitting in this chapter
to correct and permanently
settle an erroneous impression
concerning the well-nigh extinct
ruin on the Polpis road to Sia-
conset — known as the "Swain
House". It is by a few strangers to
the island mistakenly called:
"the birth-place of Benjamin
Franklin's mother"; and by a still
larger number of misinformed peo-
ple (islanders as well as stran-
gers): "the oldest house
on the island", verans, "the
"oldest house in town".
Regarding the first error, it has
been definitely settled that the
house which Abiah Folger (Franklin)

was born in, is no longer standing, but was formerly located, in the field, adjoining the spot, on the western outskirts of the Main St. road, which is now marked by the drinking fountain erected by the Abiah Folger Franklin Chapter, D. A. R. in memory of the mother of Benjamin Franklin.

In regard to the relative dates of the "Horse-Shoe House" in town, and the "Swain House" on the Palpis road — the ruin of mis-called seniority — a quotation from "Godfrey's Guide Book" published in 1882, is authority sufficient for all time. On page 231, devoted to "Old Buildings" he says:

" Wm C. Folger Esq. furnishes the following in relation to old houses: —

"The late Benjamin Franklin Folger, who died March 22nd 1859, aged eighty-two years and eleven months, was by all or nearly all intelligent persons on the island considered the very best genealogist there, and the person most reliable then living for dates and facts regarding the early history of the island, its buildings, &c. He had made these matters a study from his youth, and had consulted early records and many ancient people on these subjects. He told me the oldest house on the island then standing, some years

before his death, was the
 Jethro Coffin House on North
 Shore Hill, which was built
 in 1686. This house was purchas-
 ed by the first Nathaniel
 Paddock, from the Coffin
 family in 1707 and it was
 in the possession of the Pad-
 dock family long after I
 was born. This is the house
 that - Tristram Coffin Esq. and
 his brother bought and repaired
 in 1881. * * * * *

"I believe the next oldest
 dwelling standing on the island
 is the Swain House in Palpis" * *

* * This old house was built
 in 1704. by John Swain, Sr. for
 his daughter Elizabeth who
 married Joshua Seville".

Leaving Godfrey's Guide

Book and referring to the
 authentic genealogical records
 of William C. Folger, we
 find that Elizabeth Swain
 was born in 1676, and therefore
 had been married some time
 and was twenty-eight years
 old when the house on the
 Palpis road was built for
 her in 1704; whereas if the
 Swain house had been
 built previous to the date
 (1686.) of the Horse Shoe
 house it would have been
 when Elizabeth Swain was
 less than ten years of age and
 therefore not married, as like-
 ly to be in need of a house
 for a wedding gift. And
 an evident anachronism it
 is to accord greater antiq-
 uity to the Palpis house than

to the Jethro Coffin house.
But, until the fast-decay-
ing ruin of the Polpiz House
shall finally disappear, it
will continue to make
a Bangor's ghost of itself
and rise before the distorted
data of our misinformed sum-
mer visitors as the "truly,
truly" oldest house.

To Allen Coffin Esq. of
Nantucket, author of a most
authentic work called: "The
Life of Tristram Coffin" —
a book which is literally
packed from cover to
cover with valuable historical
matter pertaining to the island —
I am indebted for reliable
data concerning old houses.
Mr Coffin is "in his element"

when browsing among ancient deeds and legal records; and having made a thorough research in regard to the claims of the two Houses in question, he makes the unhesitating assertion that the Jethro Coffin House was built in 1686. and is the oldest house now standing upon the island, and, far-and-away ante-dates the old Polpis ruin on the Sconcet road; thus corroborating the statements already quoted from Wm. C. Folger and Benjamin Franklin Folger.

I will add here, as a link in the chain of evidence, that as John Swain, Jr., a brother of Elizabeth (Swain) Lovell married Experience Folger,

a sister of Abiah Folger
 (wife of Josiah Franklin)
 it is natural to suppose
 that Mrs Franklin may have
 passed some time in the
 house of her relatives on the
 Palpiz road. Indeed a few
 months previous to the birth
 of her son she is said to have
 paid a visit to her island
 relatives; but the illustrious
 Benjamin Franklin was born
 in Boston in 1706 instead
 of upon the island of Nan-
 tucket; and to the everlasting
 regret of Nantucketers, of
 to-day, who would like to
 be able to proudly claim
 his birthplace as well as
 his ancestral blood.

James Parson, the Historian,
 in his "Life and Times of

"Benjamin Franklin", says:

"It is probable that Benjamin Franklin derived from his mother the fashion of his body and the cast of his countenance. There are lineal descendants of Peter Folger who strikingly resemble Franklin in these particulars; one of whom, a banker of New-Orleans (in 1864)* looks like a portrait of Dr Franklin stepped out of its frame."

—*

Jacob Barker.

Chapter ~~X~~ II..Visitors to the Oldest House.

This old building will be enfolded, as the years roll on, by a dual mantle of history. The ancient and quiet-shaded life of its past, and the gayer, more ephemeral one of its present century, right seeing throng of summer visitors, will meet and blend in the shadows "on memory's walls."

To the custodians of the place, in the intervals between departed and coming guests, there come moments of revery, when the atmosphere between the seen and the unseen becomes so rarified and unprofaned by ~~the~~ disturbing conditions, that the gentle heart beats of the bride almost find an echoing throb in her own, induced by the wireless message from the far off shore and reverently caught by the "receiver" of a kindred soul of the day.

Chapter III. II

Visitors to The Oldest House.

The ~~Old~~^{Old} House will be unfolded, as the years roll on, by a dual mantle of history. The ancient and quiet-shaded life of its past, and the gayer, more ephemeral one of its Present-Century, sight-seeing, crowd of summer visitors will meet and blend in the shadows, "on memory's walls." As the years come and go, and its annual public inspection continues, the large book of registry that-lies invitingly open upon the little antique "tip-up" stand, will become a valuable relic. Already its hundreds of pages are

36 Even little children -
ambryo poets, some of them, who
have been used only to luxury
and modern conveniences, are
yet impressed by the primitive
surroundings and the subtle
aroma of romance still
lingering here and forming a
mysterious link with the far
away past.

As the year come and
go, and its annual public
inspection continues, the large
book of registry that lies
invitingly open upon the
little antique "tip up" stand,
will become a valuable
relic. Already its
hundreds of pages are -

thickly covered with a varied throng of names representing all grades and stations in life; all ages and occupations.

The early pioneer life in this house in 1686., and its peculiar curiosity, or exhibition life of today, how vastly different in tone and texture! We can turn from one to the other, just as the double-faced woven cloth for certain outer garments can be worn alternately upon either its plain or its brightly plaided side, as fancy or taste of the house shall decide. Like reversing a two-shaded golf-cape, I like to turn sometimes from thinking over the life of that

far-away, sober past, in
 which I had no part, to
 the warmth and personality
 of my summer guests, who
 come and go like birds of
 passage; and whose faces,
 impressed upon my mind,
 change and interchange, until
 at times they shape into a
 strange "Composite". And
 yet here and there a congen-
 ial spirit will stamp its
 features so indelibly upon
 my memory, by reason of the
 radiant smile or appreciative
 ear, that just the hand-
 writing upon the register, seen
 months afterwards, will bring
 to mind the individual face
 that bent above the heavy
 book while signing the name

thereon. Thus it is that the old House registers has come to have for its custodian a history all its own; and the unseen writing, "between the lines" of the recorded names would fill a volume of reminiscences that might be called "Studies in Human Nature." A ^{minor} ~~major~~ ^{multitude}, ~~thereon~~, day after day and month after month! Each day's opening knows not what it may bring forth, ere its close, in the shape of noted or unnoted guests; agreeable or disagreeable; learned and highly cultured, or the superficial and common-place.

All, indeed, are unconscious studies of genus Homo for

the Custodian who, while she is under fire of inspection with the rest of the House furnishings, is also "a chile among ^{them} ~~you~~, takin' notes!"

As a general thing the visitors ~~are~~ pleasant and agreeable and very grateful for the descriptions given and attentions shown them. But such a variety! Some take only an outside view of the House; tip-toe up to the open door, read the card with its printed price of admission; take a mental inventory of their pocket-books, and, like the Perite, "pass by on the other side". But others conclude to come in. These linger long

and lovingly; thank me
profusely at parting and
"go on their way rejoicing".

No two days are alike — no
two crowds alike! Some
are serious; some jolly;
some refined, some coarse;
some respectful, and reveren-
tial towards the Past and
the old House as its pache-
tic relic; others (though in the
minority) quite the opposite
in their lack of good-breeding
and politeness. All this,
however, I lock up in my
brain while locking the cash
in my cash-drawer, to be
balanced at night — in my
mental ledger. And, just
as the receipts in the busi-
ness reckoning of the old

Old. Hence

(2)

House exceed the small
expense account, so the

record of pleasant visitors
always shows a fine surplus
over the disagreeable ones.

Occasionally, a sober-faced
humorist of the Mark
Twain order will delight
in teasing questions and
skeptical allusions. But, 3
knowing it to be only banter
and good-natured railery,
one is willing to accept
it as such, and reply only
in like kind; as let it
drift up the flue of the old
chimney like the evanescent
sparks from the crackling
back-logs of the days of long
ago. One's eyes, in those days,
might receive a bit of tingle

from the smoke at first, but the next moment the light of pleasantry would shine through and the fire burn on with warmth and cheer in its glow.

Perhaps a few names culled at random from the registers may prove of interest to the readers of this chapter.

One page of the old book is especially dear to me. In the summer of 1899, on August 22nd was recorded the name, by her own fair hand:

"Frances H. Cleveland, Gray Gables." It was my rare privilege to entertain in the ancient house, on that bright summer day, the wife of ex-President Cleveland. Along with her name

is the autograph, also, of Mrs M. J. Carlisle of New-York, wife of Mr Cleveland's Secretary of the Treasury. Mrs Cleveland's brief visit to the Island was made almost incognito, and when she left on the next morning's steamer for her home at "Gray Gables", Nantucket's inhabitants were wholly unconscious of having "entertained an angel unawares". She was the guest while here of Col. and Mrs Robert Craig of Washington, D. C., then occupying their summer cottage at Grant Point, Nantucket.

Mrs Cleveland's visit at The Oldest House was like a ray of sunshine that warms

the heart. The newspaper accounts of her modesty, graciousness and beauty, are no exaggeration, and I can understand now why she was beloved by her fellow-students of Welles College, and admired by her associates at the White House.

Before discovering her identity I felt aware of the atmosphere of a real lady; and after the glad surprise of recognition I knew that she "came honestly by" her former title of "First Lady in the land".

She was deeply interested in the story of Mary Gardner Coffin, our young bride of fifteen, and went from room to room of the old house, with her

46.

own beautiful eyes laughing
sunshine. I shall never
forget the warm grasp of
her hand and prettily expressed
thanks at parting; and I
am glad that I was able
to welcome to the ancient home
of Jethro Coffin's bride of 1686.
The no less unaffected bride
of the "White House".

In the following summer on
August 20th 1900, Mrs Craig,
was kind enough to bring me,
also, her guest Mrs Emma C.
Perrine (formerly Mrs Folsom)
of Buffalo, N. Y. Mrs Perrine
is the mother of Mrs Cleveland,
and her own personality has the
same indescribable charm as
that of her distinguished daughter.

Another registered name that

claims my attention as I
turn the pages is that of

Thomas Pope, Jr. an old gentleman from New Bedford. Mr Pope's great-grandfather, on his mother's side, was Wm Greenleaf, High Sheriff of Boston in 1776.; who was the first person that read aloud in an out-door assembly the Declaration of Independence. In Mr Greenleaf's audience at the time was John Adams, who held up his little son John Quincy Adams, then nine years of age, that the latter might hear and see better, while the Declaration was being read. Wm Greenleaf was the father-in-law of Noah Webster, and was also related to Stephen Greenleaf who mar-

ried a daughter of Nantucket's original settler, Tristram Coffin. The poet Whittier's middle name of Greenleaf also came from the same family connection; and thus our staunch old ancestor of the island, Tristram Coffin, the Declaration of Independence, the gentle poet Whittier and my visitor from New Bedford, Thomas Pope Jr. form the links of a chain of associations woven around this page where the latter's autograph appears.

One day the usual order of things was varied by a roomful of visiting Friends or Quakers — who were greatly interested in the old house, and were themselves objects of interest to the ^{amongst} gayer dressed

"world's people" who were present at the same time.

Among the latter was a young lady with a camera who was about to take a picture of the outside of the house; and the happy thought came to her that it would add to her picture, and be quite in keeping with the place, if she could get the sweet faced Friends to group themselves about the open door-way. They readily complied with her request and arranged themselves in characteristic attitudes. After the snap-shot was taken, one of the men of the party who wore the straightest brim to his hat, but who nevertheless had the keenest sense of humor, suggested: "There might label this

picture ^{the} "Innocents Abroad"!

We all laughed, and "made a note of it"; and months afterwards when an excellent copy of the picture was sent me by the artist who took it, I "labeled" it in accordance with his facetious suggestion.

* Many little incidents break the monotony from day to day. On one occasion I was showing the crane in the old fire-place to an Episcopal clergyman. He told me of a visit that he once made to Mt. Vernon, and while looking into the fire-place there, he said an old gentleman chanced to be sitting on the settle in the chimney-corner at the time, when the custodian drew the clergyman's attention to the furnishings by the remark: "Look

* Sweet Photo. "Innocents Abroad."

at that old crane in there."

Instantly, the old man on the settle jumped up, shook his fist in the face of the innocent custodian and angrily exclaimed:

"What do you mean, sir?

By insulting me, sir!"

The custodian was puzzled, but the man continued excitedly:

"Calling me an old Crane, and telling the ministers to look at me!"

In the explanations which quickly followed it turned out that the ^{name of the} old man on the settle was ~~named~~ Crane, and the poor custodian had some difficulty in making him understand that he was drawing attention to the ancient crane on which the settles were hung, and which was suspended above

the andirons; and that nothing personal was intended as he was unaware of his name.

By a strange coincidence ^{on the same afternoon following the morning when the} on the same afternoon following the morning when the clergyman had told me the above story of the angry Crane, I, too, had a ^{similar} little experience. I was showing to a party of young ladies the furnishings of the fireplace in the "Keep-room", and wishing to distinguish the difference of the crane there from the upright, adjustable trammel hook in the "Living-room", I said, as I swung it from the andirons: "Here is the original, swinging crane". "Ah!" said one of the

young ladies, with a twinkle in her eye, "A quivering crane is it—? And there is a dancing Crane!" At the same time she commenced pirouetting about the room. Her friends laughed but I did not fully catch the flavor of the joke till after she had gone, when looking ^{at} ~~upon~~ the register I found her name in Mrs — A. Crane.

Another incident of a recent summer: A young lad of jolly physique, upon entering the room caught sight of a sign-board above the mantle, which had been taken from the stern of a ship, wrecked upon the coast long years ago, and ^{is} now kept in the old house with other ships' names, as reliq

of the sea. The board over the mantle bore the name of "Hamilton". To my surprise the young boy ^{had} "buck an attitude", saluted the sign-board and exclaimed: lustily;

"Ah Hamilton! Welcome Hamilton!"

It turned out that the boy's name was Hamilton Smith, and he instinctively felt a comradeship with this unknown vessel bearing his own given name; although he was unaware of the board's significance until I had time to explain its history.

The visitors, to use a sailors phrase, hail from all quarters of the globe. On the registers are names from

Old House

(7)

Copenhagen, Paris, London, Japan, Cuba, Austria, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Germany; while our own country furnishes tourists from Maine to California, and from as far South as Dallas Texas. The door stands open to pilgrims as early as the middle of June, and from that time until the third week of September there is daily travel across its ancient threshold, and the custodian ^{being} is on the alert to "welcome the coming and speed the parting guest". The first to arrive, in the sweet June days are the Bridal Couples — God bless them! — and it is a delight to watch their interest in the old house and, at the same

time, their absent-minded, deeper interest in each other. The dainty brides of to-day look almost pityingly at the primitive surroundings of the bride of 1686.; and when I show them her simple furnishings — or lack of them — they exchange tender glances with their own beloveds and express a shy little "vote of thanks" that their own house-keeping did not commence in that far-off time. In June the Nantucket sight-seers are usually from near-by cities of our own State and Connecticut, from Boston and New Bedford, ^{and} ~~or~~ perhaps the eastern cities of New-York. These early comers are likely to be clerks and other ~~working~~ ^{busy} people who have

a little vacation of a fortnight in early summer, and then must hasten back to the daily routine. So they do not come from far away, but, making a flying visit of a few days to the island, they drink in great draughts of our sea-air tonic and then "fold their tents" and away again, with new strength, we trust, for another year of usefulness.

Later on, in middle July ^{and} ~~and~~ August, come the ~~Western~~ ^{summer} and the ~~Southern~~ ^{sunbathers} people, ~~the~~ ^{outing} the leisure class, ~~the~~ ^{and} who stay and stay, and enjoy themselves to the full, and "dream the happy hours away". In August the hotels are "brimming full"; the cottages all occupied. The town must be explored; the sights and "points

of interest" must be "taken in"; and so "The Oldest House" on Sunset Hill is sought by young and old, by grave and gay alike. Some come to see ~~the~~ regularly year after year, and sometimes several times during the same season, bringing, as their guests, friends who have not before seen the old structure.

From the registers I cull these names of

Regular Visitors:

Miss Helen Minshall,
Terre Haute, Indiana.

Mr & Mrs Chas. Minshall,
Terre Haute, Indiana.

Miss Margaret Minshall "^{all from Terre Haute Indiana}"
The late Capt. J. W. Congdon, U. S. Revenue Service.

Mrs W. C. Underwood, Belmont, Mass.

Miss Helen Underwood, " "

59 to 65 - (1)
 Yonkers, N.Y.; Mr. and Mrs. George Libble,
 Mt. Vernon, N.Y.; Mr. and Mrs. Irving
 Elting, Miss Elting, Mr. and Mrs. Charles N.
 Arnold, Miss Katharine Arnold, and
 Peter B. Hoyt of Poughkeepsie, N.Y.;
 Clifford Holger South Frammingham, Mass.;
 Mrs. Lucia B. Tyng, Peoria Ill.; Mrs.
 C. G. Lee, Wollaston, Mass.; the late
 Charles H. Webb and Miss Webb, Mr. and
 Mrs. William C. Boone, John T. Boone,
 Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Vanderpool, and
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul G. Thebaud, of
 New York City.

There are dear little children
 who love to come each year and
 peep, in wide-eyed wonder, into the
 shaded corners of the rooms; and
 listen over and over again to the
 story of the "Indian Closet." I love
 to read these names of my children;
 recalling their bright faces in the
 prevalent hand writing so peculiarly
 alike, as taught in the schools
 of to-day. Here are the names

59 55 65 (2)

Miss. Helen Minshall, Mr. and Mrs.
 Charles Minshall and Miss. Margaret
 Minshall, from Terre Haute, Indiana;
 the late Capt. J. W. Congdon, U.S. Revenue
 Service; Miss. Helen Underwood, Mrs. E. P.
 Atkins and Miss. Helen Atkins, from
 Belmont, Mass.; the Misses Dorothea
 and Irene Fargnhar, Detroit, Mich.;
 Miss. Nellie Bishop, Newtonville, Mass.; Misses
 Ruth and Beatrice Schutz and Miss. Margery
 Junker, Summit, N.J.; Miss. Phebe A. Luther,
 Brooklyn, N.Y.; Miss. Agnes W. Gould,
 Albany, N.Y.; Mr. Allen Burdick, Richard G.
 Elkins, Miss. Emily Waker, Mrs. S. C. Lugee
 and Miss. Elizabeth B. Porter, of Boston,
 Mass.; Mrs. C. N. Bishop of Worcester,
 Mass.; Mr. E. T. Tucker, New Bedford, Mass.;
 Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Evans and Mrs. Robert
 Craig, Washington, D.C.; Mrs. Stokely
 Morgan, Roxbury and Nantucket, Mass.;
 Mr. and Mrs. Harold C. Kimball, Rochester,
 N.Y.; Mr. and Mrs. George W. Shaw,
 Lansingburgh, N.Y.; Louis A. Howland,
 Chicago, Ill.; Misses Cornelia and Isabel
 Hayt and Mr. and Mrs. William S. Walsh,

55 to 65 (37)

of some of them:

Nathalie Walker, Brookline, Mass.;
 Edith S. Walsh, Wilhelmina Walsh,
 Master Frank C. Walsh, and Jennie Hoyt,
~~Yonkers, N.Y.~~ and Eleanor Radford,
 Yonkers, N.Y.; Master Stokely Morgan,
 Roxbury and Nantucket, Mass.; Master
 David Williamson, Colorado Springs, Col.;
 Master Charles Paul Kimball, Master Mitchell
 Hart, Rochester, N.Y.; and Miss Ruth Brown,
 Oneida, N.Y.

From the list of regular visitors,
 I call for special mention, the name
 of the late lamented Charles Henry
 Webb, member of the "Authors' Club"
 of New York and long a summer
 resident of Nantucket. Mr. Webb and
 his daughter, Miss Webb, delighted
 in bringing to the old home on
 the hill top celebrities from
 the world of letters; and I am
 indebted to him for an
 introduction to many a
 "rare avis" of poetry and
 prose. Mr. Webb's own
 writings on the non-de-plume
 John

Mr & Mrs George Tibble,
 Isl. Vernon, N. Y.

Peter B. Hayt,
 Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Chas. W. Webb and Miss Webb,
 New York and Nantucket.

Mr & Mrs Wm C. Boone,
 New York, N. Y.

John T. Boone " " "

Mrs Lucie B. Tyng,
 Peoria, Illinois.

Mr & Mrs Irving Elting & Miss Elting,
 Poughkeepsie N. Y.

Miss Elizabeth B. Porter,
 Boston, Mass.

Mrs C. G. Lee,
 Wollaston, Mass.

Mr & Mrs A. W. Vanderpool,
 New York, N. Y.

Mr & Mrs C. N. Arnold,
 Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
 and
 Miss Katharine Arnold,
 Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
 Mr & Mrs Paul G. Theband,
 New York, N. Y.
 Mr Clifford Folger,
 So. Framingham, Mass.
 Mr & Mrs Wm S. Walsh,
 Yonkers N. Y.

Then there are dear little children
 who love to come each year and
 peep, in wide-eyed wonder, into
 the shaded corners of the rooms,
 and listen over and over again
 to the story of the "Indian Closet."
 I love to read these names of
 my children; recalling their bright
 faces in the prevalent hand-writing
 so fearfully and peculiarly alike, as

taught in the schools of to-
day. Here are ^{the names of} some of them.

Children who are fond of com-
ing to the "Horse Shoe House":—

Nathalie Walker,

Brookline, Mass.

Edith S. Walsh,

Yonkers, N. Y.

Wilhelmina Walsh,

Yonkers, N. Y.

Master Frank C. Walsh,

and "Gene Hoyt"

Yonkers N. Y.

Eleanor Radford,

Yonkers, N. Y.;

Master Stokely Morgan,

Roxbury and Nantucket, Mass.

Master David Williamson,

Colorado Springs, Col.;

Master Charles Pond Kimball,

Rochester, N. Y.;

and

Master Mitchell Hart,
 Rochester, N. Y. and
 Miss Ruth Brown,
 Oneida, N. Y.
 Master Jesse Hoyt,
 Yonkers, N. Y.

From the list of regular visitors,
 I call for special mention, the
 name of ^{the late lamented} Charles Henry Webb,
 member of the "Anchor Club" of
 New York and a ^{long} summer resi-
 dent of Nantucket. Mr Webb
 and his daughter, Miss Webb, delight
 to bring to the old house on the
 hill-top celebrities from the
 world of letters; and I am indebt-
 ed to him for an introduction
 to many a "rara avis" of poetry
 and prose. Mr Webb's own writings
 over the nom-de-plume "John

Paul", sparkle with wit and quaint conceits. His published books of poems bear the titles: "Vagrom Verse" and "With Lead and Line". He has brought to the Old House on different "red letter days" the following well-known lights of literature:—

Mr Charles Warren Stoddard, late professor of English literature in the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., and author of "South Sea Idyls", "In The Footprints of The Padre" and other well-known works in prose and verse. Mr Stoddard is the most delightful, fully modest "great light" that it has ~~ever~~ been my privilege to meet, and I look back upon that August afternoon as one of great social rarity. Here's hoping

that his own "footprints" may
some day be repeated on
Sunset Hill!

Other friends with Mr Webb
were: Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke
of New-York and Princeton,
Frank Dempster Sherman,
the poet, —
J. C. Fremont Gardner,
and others; and at a recent
date, Miss Hildegard Hawthorne,
daughter of Julian and grand-
daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne.
Miss Webb also brought her
guests Mr & Mrs Howard Thayer
Kingsbury of New-York.

The register contains the
names of the following authors,
newspaper men and professionals:

George Willis Cooke,
Boston, Mass.,

Judge Wm Russell Thayer,
Philadelphia Pa.;

Mr & Mrs John E. Morey (Evening Times)
Rochester, N. Y.,

Chas. C. M. Mc Bride,
Elizabeth N. J.,

Mrs Wolcott J. Humphrey,
Vice-president Wyoming County Nat. Bank,
Warsaw, N. Y.,

Henry W. Longfellow (Cousin of the poet)
Boston, Mass.,

Chas. F. Pidgin (author)
Boston, Mass.,

Mr & Mrs Pierre Purcell,
(Union and Advertiser)
Rochester, N. Y.,

Mr & Mrs L. D. Gibbs
(The Springfield Republican)
Springfield Mass.,

Mrs Minot J. Savage,
New-York,

Sister Gray, ++

England,

Walter Whipple Arnold,
Rochester, N. Y.,

Alexander Starbuck,
(Editor of The Waltham Free-Press)
Waltham, Mass.,

Mrs Katherine Lente Stevenson,
State Pres. W. C. F. U.

West Newton, Mass.,

Albert H. Ring, West Acton, Mass.

{ Isabel Irving Thompson,

{ W. W. Thompson,

{ Henry Collins Walsh, New York,

J. W. Burdett, Boston, Mass.

Geo. Lincoln Whitaker,

(New-York Herald)

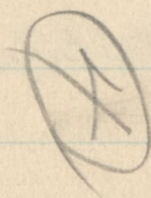
New-York,

E. F. Cunningham,

(New-York Tribune)

New-York,

Old House



The late Wm. Frank Barnard,
Supt. Fire Points House of Industry.

New York, N.Y.

J. L. Spencer,

(Proprietor of old Slater Mill —
first cotton mill in America, built 1793)
Pawtucket, R. I.,

Jesse M. Smith, (civil engineer)

and

New York, N.Y.

Walter James (civil engineer and architect)
New York, N.Y.

The army and navy are represented by: —

Wm. M. D. Mc Cook, Maj Gen. U. S. A.,

Brig. General M. Brayton, U. S. A.,

The late Lieut Berkeley Morgan U. S. N.,

Surgeon Oliver Diehl, U. S. N.,

Medical Inspector S. W. Dickson, U. S. N.,

Washington D. C.,

General J. W. Ketchum,

Albany Plains, N. Y.

~~New York~~

J. Pitman, U. S. Arsenal
Augusta, Georgia.

J. L. Pitman, M.D., Augusta Arsenal, Ga.

Wm H. Corbuses, U. S. A.,

Henry W. Fitch, Chief Engineer U. S. N.,
(Retired with rank of Commander)
Washington, D. C.

There is such a long list of medical men and clergymen who find benefit at Nantuxet, both physically and spiritually, that a few only can be mentioned here:—

Dr. C. S. Jordan,
Asheville N. C.,

Dr T. E. Knowles,
South Orange, N. J.,

Dr W. S. Gibson,
Baltimore, Md.,

Dr Geo. A. Ordway,
Boston, Mass.

Dr. Allen Burdick, Boston, Mass.

Dr. C. G. Lane,

Poughkeepsie, N. Y.,

Dr. John O. Roe,

Rochester, N. Y.,

Dr. E. J. Tucker,

New Bedford, Mass.,

Dr. Henry Middleton Fisher,

Philadelphia, Pa.,

{ Dr. Mary F. Mann,

{ Dr. M. Ella Mann,

Nantucket, Mass.,

Dr. E. G. Foy,

Weathersfield Conn.,

Dr. James Foy,

Willimantic, Conn.,

Rev. Wallace Radcliffe,

Washington, D. C.,

Rev. W. C. Snodgrass,

Plainfield, N. J.,

Rev. A. W. Gibson,

Mumsey, Pa.,

Rev. Geo. R. Hazard,
Southboro, Mass.,

Fr. J. J. McGee, S. J.

(St-Mary's Catholic Church)
Nantucket, Mass.,

Fr. Austin Dowling,
Providence, R. I.,

and
Rev. Sumner W. Stevens,
Philadelphia, Pa.

In the bright-August days visiting
yachts come into Nantucket's harbor,
anchoring for a brief season and
giving gay parties on shore "to see
how we look". On my book I
find the following:—

S. Yacht—"Marion".

J. W. Gou, Goshen, N. Y.,

Chas. P. Berdell, Summit-N. J.

Theodore Berdell " "

Alice Pratt Berdell " "

and
73. of
"C. Prescott", Summit, N. J.

Yacht "Albatross", New York.
Messrs C. & D. Palmer.
Mrs C. M. Palmer.
Miss Nellie Palmer.

Yacht "Charlotte" - Chicago.
Mr & Mrs A. M. Foster,
Mr E. W. Brest,
Guy A. Smith,
Mr & Mrs James A. Lawrence.

Yacht "Millie" - Barrington, R.I.
Commodore John Jenckes, wife and daughters.

Steam Yacht "Susanna".
Robert F. Ballentine.
R. & B. Pitney.
Capt Simpson.
Mr & Mrs Frank Berkleie.
Gov W. Pitney.

Yacht —————

J. W. Dungan - Denver, Col.
 J. E. Reid, New-York, ~~N.Y.~~
 Mrs Reid, " " "
 and Rhea Reid, of New York... "
 Mrs Dungan, Denver Col.
 Miss Dungan, of ~~Denver~~, Col. +
 Clara J. Morgan, Richmond, Indiana.
 Maj. L. E. Campbell (U. S. A. Retired)
 of Denver, Col.
 Miss Campbell, " "
 and Oliver W. Bogen, New-York, ~~N.Y.~~

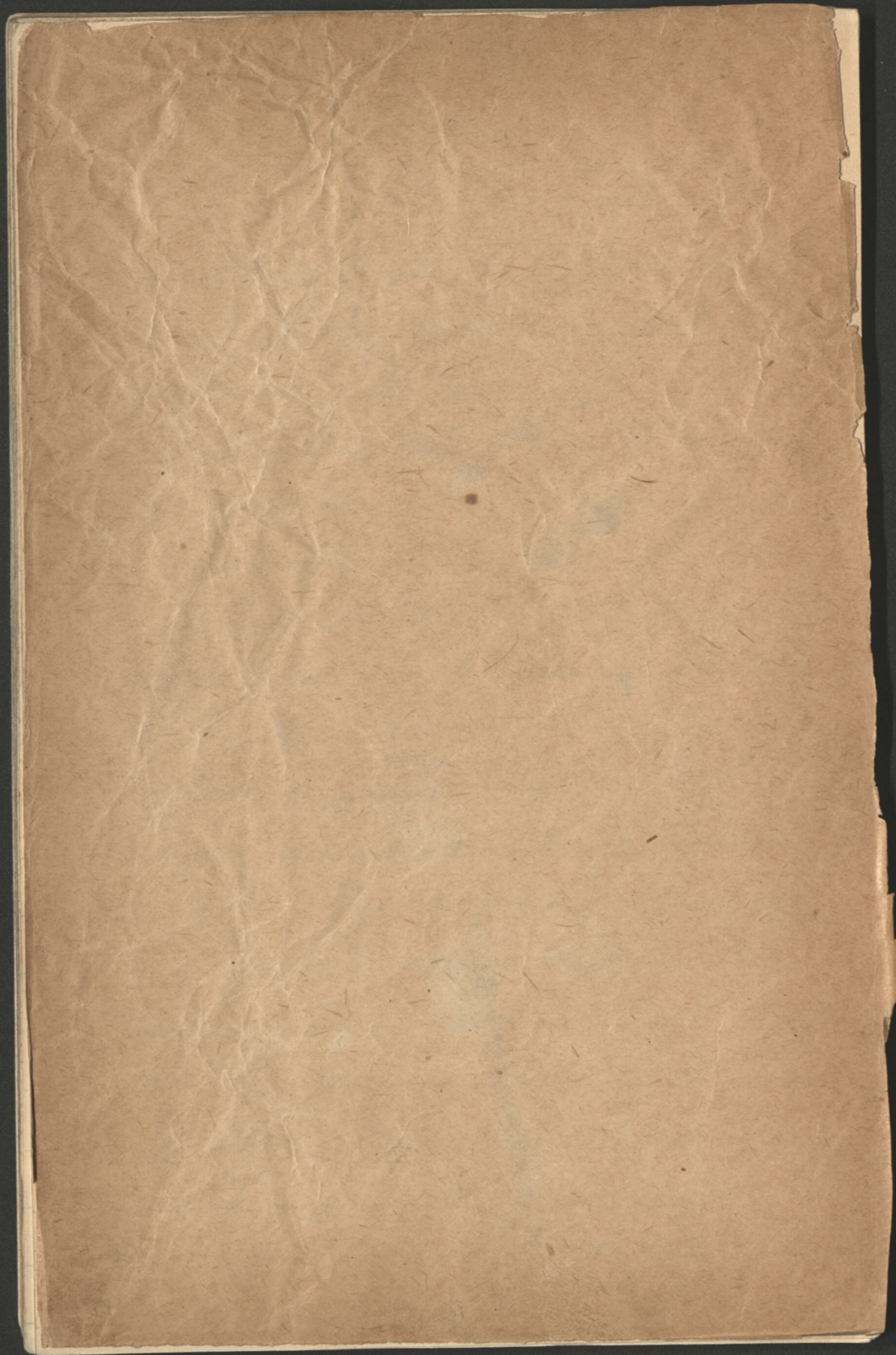
Yacht "Gervasia" - New-York.
 Alice Mary Sloane.

Names of ~~Scientists~~ I have not
 been able to identify except one —
 and that - by no means the least:
 Dr Benjamin Sharp of Philadelphia
 and Nantucket. Dr Sharp
 was for eleven years the cor-

responding secretary of the "Academy of Natural Sciences" of Philadelphia, Pa. He has travelled extensively, collecting information and specimens for the Academy. He sailed to the West Indies in 1888-9; went with the first Peary expedition to the Arctic in 1891, and in 1893 he was collecting rarities and scientific lore in The Sandwich Islands, Alaska, and Siberia. And yet after all his travels abroad, Dr Sharp was pleased to find something to interest him in Nantucket's ancient relic of olden days, ~~the~~ the Horse Shoe House.

The great book of record is sprinkled so thickly from cover to cover with the names of Coffin, Folger, Swain, Starbuck, Bunker, Gardner, Macy, Bernard, Huxley,

~~Macy~~, Jenks, and other good
 Nantucket stock, or descendants
 of Nantucketers, that ^a ~~general~~
 volume would be needed to
 publish the list; and so I trust
 the ~~necessary~~ omissions from
 these pages will be readily
 pardoned.



77.
Chapter ~~XX~~ XXII.

Early and Later Days.

Nantucket has a charm and a beauty and a sense of restfulness all its own. It is said that islanders have a stronger love of "native land" than any other people; and this seems deeply true of the inhabitants of our own fair sea-girl shore. To come back to its quiet streets and homesteads, in middle or later life; and to spend one's last days here, is the fond dream of nearly all of us. There is very little chance of business; much less of money-getting; but there is better far; there is rest and memory and safety; and time to enjoy God's own lavish wealth of sea and sky and Nature's

gladness. And so, again and again the journey is made to this "beautiful isle of the sea" in quest of health for the bodies and spirits and tired nerves of her children. As one looks eagerly into a mother's dear, welcoming face at the end of a journey, so every returning Nantucketer looks with almost tear-dimmed eyes of gladness for the first glimpse of the town of Nantucket, rising to view with queenly grace from her sea-encircled throne. It is a birth-place of which we are justly proud, for its record is historical; and the pages regarding her whale fisheries are of world-wide renown; while her war records, both colonial and in the civil war, are

all that our ⁷⁹ ~~Patristic~~ feelings could desire
~~magnificent~~; and the achieve-
ments of her sons and daughters
in the noblest walks of science,
literature and Art, as well as in
the humble heroisms of home life,
have left no blot upon her ex-
cution.

Precious then to many is the an-
nual privilege of resting and lux-
uriating in this quaint old sea-blow
place, and laying in a store of life's
saline elixir. The days are so
calm and blue and deliciously
idle for the summer vacationist;
the nights made for rocking the
cradle of the gods. Most all
of the houses are ^{simple} ~~unostentatious~~
in architecture, owing to the Quaker
taste of the early inhabitants, and
yet substantial and comfortable
in the extreme. From the windows

Our

80.

[of many of these one can daily feast the eyes upon the exhaustless blue of the harbor's shifting, shimmering beauty. Twice each day in summer one can hear the sound of the coming steamer's whistle, and, taking a position at the open window, watch for her to cleave the channel and round majestically to her pier. A never-failing delight is to watch the ever changing face of the sea and to drink in its health laden air. The view, from my home window, of the pleasure sails that dot its surface is never twice alike. Swift little cat-boats and yachts of all sizes are constantly flitting past and tacking to suit the breeze; seeming in the summer sun like great white winged

butterflies of the deep. Then again the wind gets into the East, and the gale stiffens, and the white caps dance; and we watch the wild leaps of the foaming waves which Robert Louis Stevenson calls "the skipper's daughters fleeing before the breeze".

The old town is full of the deepest interest, for every house has its history of old time association; every street and lane its memories of the past. To visit the "halls of one's ancestors" after a lapse of years, and look once more upon rooms and ingle-side where linger now only ancient shadow faces, is to feel a thrill that words cannot convey — only the heart can mutely ~~feel~~ know.

Old House

(5)

The most interesting period of the island's history is her middle past. To this "golden age" of her prosperity and maritime success her inhabitants point with pride and enthusiasm, as Nantucket's "glorious days". It might with equal truth be called her oily days. From 1834 to 1850 she was at the "white heat" of the whaling industry; and the spreading canvas of her shipping was on every sea — the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and even the Arctic ocean. Her whaling and merchant captains paced their vessels' careening decks as veritable monarchs of the deep; and brought home from foreign ports well-freighted cargoes of oil that

represented months and years of arduous toil and strenuous wrestling with storm and fleet and breakers' roar. Cargoes that enriched themselves and the ship owners; and gave to the residential part of the town an air of comfort and solidity that is noticeable even to-day in many of the old mansions; particularly on the Main St. which is lined on either side with great double houses, where large families were reared and educated, and exchanged neighborly courtesies and the old time graces of a true gentility.

In 1834 there were 10,000. inhabitants, and over 200 full-rigged — or square rigged ships, besides smaller craft; and

Nantucket ranked third in wealth in the whole state of Massachusetts — Boston being first and Salem second. In 1870 her last ship was sold and not one "whaler" was "left to do her reverence". Nantucket was a belle of the sea in those olden days, and traces of her beauty even yet remain. Can you blame her if, like poor old Mrs. Nickleby, she looks pathetically into the eyes of inquisitive, and perhaps supercilious "strangers" and cannot help boasting that she "has seen better days"?

Ah, and such days! All the craftsmen were at work; all the industries flourished around the central one of oil. Coopers shops for fashioning the great casks and hogheads resounded

with the cooper's adg, and were
 fragrant with great mounds of
 "Curly shavings". Rope-walks
 "stretched their lengths along" where
^{huge} great hawsers and tarry rope-
 yarns were woven and twisted
 in the glow of the sunmer sun-
 beams. (To a genuine descendant
 of those times — even two generations
 remote — a stray whiff of tarred
 rope, in passing a city rope store,
 to-day, will send a thrill of
 ecstacy through his nerves that
 "land lubbers" "know not of")
 Candle houses there were that
 worked up the oil into smooth
 tapered candles, and contained
^{large} great cases of them all ready
 for shipment or for home consump-
 tion. Blacksmith shops where
 the anvils rang with merry chorus
 all day long, fashioning Coppers

nails and sheathing, and Charpoons and whale-spades, galore. Paint shops and boat-builders' shops. And sail-lofts; that could be cleared of gearing and sail rubbish at short notice, and an evening ball improvised; where blue jacketed sailor-lads of good repute could "trip the light fantastic" with bright-eyed lassies — the real "elite" of the town. I once heard an aged Nantucket lady, in speaking of that time, and drawing herself up piquantly, allude to it-jesting-ly as: "The good old days, when oil was plenty; money was plenty; and sailors were plenty!"

It was not all play, as this lady well remembered. While there were heroes sailing the "waters blue" there were heroines at home, keeping the hearth-stone bright,

and the heart-light and brave
and true, and a royal welcome
in store for their returning voyagers.
These heroines were in all ranks of
life — from the Captain's and
mate's wife to the help-meat of
the humblest sailor that plying in
his lonely bunk on the home-coming
tide.

The home-coming ships; how much
that meant to all concerned!
So much to report of the cargo and
crew; so much to learn concern-
ing the home life on shore. For
months no passing ship had been
"spoken"; no news of home and
family. Pathetic tales to tell
of loss and sickness on both
sides. Sometimes a ship would
come into the harbor with flag
at half-mast; and the waiting
wives on shore knew not which

one was to face the cruel blow of bereavement. There was a comradeship among the women of those days and a bond of sympathy that we, to-day, have but faint conception of.

The great "walks" — or lookouts — on top of the large houses, were where the ship owners repaired, day after day, with spy-glass in hand, watching for their returning vessels. As they paced back and forth, on the queer house-decks between earth and sky, they were trying to mentally figure out the possible amount of oil that was gurgling even then in the tight-calked casks safely stowed away in the hold of the ship in the offing.

On the "walks", also, that belonged to the houses where Captains' families resided, would often

be seen the figure of a woman; gliding to and fro; perhaps a child in her arms; and looking wistfully sea-ward in the direction where she thought her husband's sail might "be in sight".

There was a custom in those days, among the young boys of the town, a rivalry among them — to be on the watch for expected home-coming ships; and, knowing the several flags, to run speedily and announce the welcome news to some anxious wife that her ship was in sight. The first boy to bring the message to her was substantially rewarded. A stated and regular sum was given according to the rank of the woman's husband. The captain's wife always gave a dollar for the tidings — the mate's wife

gave fifty cents; and so on down the scale. Not that the mate's wife was any less glad to hear of her husband's safe return, but her funds differed in proportion to the rank.

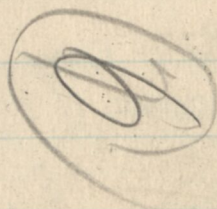
Folded away, and fading now, among the pages of that early day — like fragrant smelling, sprays of lavender or sweet marjoram — is many a fragment of "the old, old story" of love and fidelity, and patient waiting for the realization of hopes long deferred. Brave hearts sailed away on the very eve of plighted troth, to be absent three, and sometimes four years "around the Horn" before seeing the loved ones again. A comic song that was going the rounds of the theatres a few years since had more pathos

than fun in a verse wherein
a sailor's last words to his
Chum enfolded:

"A crooked sixpence in my chest —
Likewise a lock of hair —
These things I do
Solicit - ize you
Unto my sweet - heart bear".

Oh those little crooked sixpences
exchanged between Nantucket lovers
on the eve of sailing! How many
a fond look has been given them
during the voyage! Many a poor
sailor lad's heart has been
kept warm under his blue jacket,
and his eyes have softened ten-
derly as her sweet face seemed
to watch from aloft while he
swung back and forth in the
ship's shrouds; his hair taking

Old House



on that - peculiar - turned under
roll at the back of his neck,
where the spray of the sea-foam
kept it in curl. And the little
gold rings in his ears — so tiny
you could scarcely detect the hoops
of wire — how they glistened when
the nights were met with fog!
Why did sailors wear ear-rings,
I wonder! There has always been
a mysterious fascination to me
in the perfect lang froid with
which these muscular creatures
of storm, and gale, and possible
shipwreck, sport such feminine
ornaments. I have sometimes
wondered if it was to carry
about with them — as a sort-
of charm — some tender little
suggestion of the characteristics of
the loved ones on shore.

9/11/1891 There was a certain

unwritten code among the girls of the island to look with favor only upon those who "went down to the sea in ships"; and landmen had a poor chance among them in the matrimonial line. But sometimes, with "an eye to the main chance" of a "bird in hand" against "bird in the bush", a betrothed sailor's lover far away at sea has been cruelly discarded in his absence; and returning from a long four year's voyage he has found the faithless one married to a rival knitos on shore who had never "struck a whale". Some poor sailors were thus "wing broken" (as this unfortunate and disconsolate state was aptly styled) several times; and on successive voyages, before

a faithful help-mate was finally secured. But, happily, such cruel cases were the exception and not the rule.

The religious life of Van-
 Nickel has varied with the centu-
 ries; but, take it all-in-all,
 the underlying warp and woof has
 been woven of the solid principles
 and unquestioned probity of the
 society called Friends - or Quakers.
 The very first established religious
 sect of the island, according to
 some authorities, was the old "North
 Meeting" - or Presbyterian - now
 changed to Congregationalist; whose
 "Vestry" of to-day is an ancient
 structure which once stood in the
 old settlement of Sherborne, near
 Capann Pond. About the same
 time when this Vestry was erected

there was also a sprinkling of Baptists and a few Friends.

But everything was favorable for the seed of the latter society to germinate and take root. And so when the early preachers came with their gentle exhortations and quiet, simple ways, the people "heard them gladly" and readily adopted that faith, being already used to the "Thee" and "Thou" of the mother tongue.

In 1698, Thomas Chalkley, a Friend from England, visited the island. He wrote of the people: "At this time a Friend was convinced whose name was Starbuck who became very serviceable and lived and died an eminent minister of Christ on the island." The person here alluded to was

Nathaniel Starbuck, Jr. son of
Nathaniel and Mary (Coffin) Star-
buck.

In 1701, John Richardson and
Peleg Slocum, Friends from
Dartmouth, visited the place in
a floop. Meetings were held at
the home of Mary Starbuck and
from this beginning the Society
grew to great strength and influ-
ence. Mary Starbuck was the daugh-
ter of Tristram Coffin and married
Nathaniel, son of Edward Starbuck.
She has always been known in the
annals of the island as "The great
Mary Starbuck", on account of her
wisdom and her value to her
townspeople. The Society of Friends
on Nantucket really sprang from
this family.

About the year 1700. there were
but two or three individuals

bearing the name of Friends,
while in 1735 Daniel Stanton

found a large number of "choice
members"; and Samuel Fothergill
in 1755 says there were "nearly two
thousand of Friends and attenders
of meetings". The population at
this date was a little over four
thousand.

And so these people of sober garb
and gentle speech and warm, hon-
est hearts, "increased and mul-
tiplied" till theirs was the
prevailing order of belief at the
time of Nantucket's "palmy days".

Her Quaker merchants and her
Quaker sea captains were famil-
iar figures in the busy streets;
while the sweet faced Quaker
mothers and the demure maidens
made a picture both pleasing

and reserful to the eye.

Narrowness of living perhaps there was, and a rigidity of habits; but underlying all was a worthiness of motive — a nobleness of character — that has leavened succeeding generations, and has been of sufficient endurance, we trust, to save the Isle. Gradually the Society declined until the last "Meeting House" was closed for want of attendants; and a few years since the last Quaker inhabitant of Nantucket — William Hosier — "ceased from his labors" but "his works do follow him".

Traits have been handed down from a long line of Quaker ancestors that are easily discernable to-day. There is

a plainness of speech; an independence of thought; and a quiet contentment with one's lot; which are a natural inheritance from that far off time. We use to-day the plain "yes" and "no" in answering one another; and are chary in the use of titles; calling each other by our given names, even in adult life; thus keeping up the comradeship of childhood, when it was John or Reuben or Rhebe W. instead of Mr. or Mrs. —; but that is because we all remain more or less connected by the family links of long ago, and we feel a subtle something tugging at our heart strings that we cannot explain or even understand. We only know that we are "islanders", and that word contains volumes of

meaning to us all.

In this year of grace 1905, Nantucket's glory and grandeur have departed; her population has dwindled from ten thousand to less than three thousand; her sea captains are nearly all dead; their descendants mostly resident in active fields of labor on the mainland; but the old island is still beautiful and still holds out inviting arms, and offers her great panitarium to annual hosts of strangers who seek her shores in search of health for mind and body and weary nerves. Her charms are as seductive, her climate as salubrious, her breath as sweet with the invigorating salt sea flavor as in the olden time of her prosperity. The great

outlying moorlands, fragrant with heathery moss and bayberry and sweet-fern, have been compared to Scotland's own. The musical South wind puffs over them fanning the cheek of the invalid and giving it an added roundness and a fresh coat of tan that the "Brownies" might envy.

There are comparatively few trees on the island; although today the town is well supplied with shade trees, among which are some fine specimens of elms. On Centre Street, near the Ocean House, there stood, until recently, three large willows which came originally from Napoleon's park at St. Helena. The slips from which these large willows grew were brought from that historic

Place of burial, years ago,
by Captain William Plasket
in the ship Napoleon, which
was formerly owned here and
whose name-board now hangs
on the wall of the "Keeping-room"
at the Old House.

But if trees are "few and far
between", Nature seems determin-
ed to clothe the fields and
the open moors with a floral
beauty that is unsurpassed in
extent and variety. Botanists
revel in the island's wonderful
Flora, which is said to contain
more specimens of wild-flowers
than any other section of New-
England. If only the botanists
"helped themselves" to these treas-
ures there would be no cause
for complaint; for your true

Old House

D

botanist gathers only what is
 necessary for "specimens" and
 then strides manfully on his way.
 But unfortunately there are un-
 thinking tourists who ruthlessly
 pluck rare varieties and as
 ruthlessly beat up roots and
 all; then scatter "to the four
 winds" these gifts of Nature; heed-
 less of the fact that even a lar-
 ish growth of root and vine and
 tendril can in time be extermin-
 ated by such annual wholesale
 raids. "Tis true, 'tis pity" that
 the shy abiding place of a small
 patch of genuine Scotch Heather,
 which is trying to attain a secure
 habitat, has to be kept at
 present a "dead secret" among
 a favored few until the precious
 plants shall have time to increase

beyond danger of extinction.

A few years since a society was formed which is called:
 "The Maria L. Owen Society for the Protection
 of the Nantucket Flora".

This society is trying to do "here a little, and there a little" in the way of an "ounce of prevention" to cure this annual "plaghter of the innocents".

I take pleasure in copying here the society's printed card of appeal, wherein it:

"Respectfully calls the attention of visitors to the fact that the existence of the sabbatia, swamp-orchids, Hibiscus, red lilies, heather, and some other especially attractive plants, is seriously menaced through reckless picking. It asks the co-operation of those who delight in the

beauty of the commons, and their aid in perpetuating this charm by careful gathering both in smaller quantities and in such a manner as to leave the roots uninjured. Recommendation is made also that matches be used with care and that all fires noticed on the commons be put out or promptly reported to the Forest Firewards".

In this unpretending old seaport town, where wealth once abounded and gentility was inborn, there are, to-day, rare curios and antiquities of which the floating tide of "summer people" little dream. Many a fragrant cedar chest contains rich fabrics from foreign looms of "laug ryne". Many a china closet sports its

bit of lustre ware or its
helmet-pitcher; its china

tea-set of egg-shell frailty, or
its monogram dinner-sets com-
plete in every piece. It was a
custom of the early whaling days
for the captains, mates, and
even the sailors, to bring home,
from their long voyages "around
the Horn", something dainty and
precious, and pleasing to the
feminine taste, as presents to
the dear home keepers who had
so patiently waited for the
returning sails and kept the no-
less tedious "watch on shore". Thus
many homes here to-day con-
tain these mementoes of the
heart that have been handed
down from generation to genera-
tion. Relic hunters would be

glad to purchase them at fabulous price, but they are not for sale. A peek at some of these private collections of quaintly carved furniture and rare ceramics is a privilege indeed. It is often said that "blood will tell". Is it not as curiously true that a certain wraith of the old-time hospitality still lingers about the antique mat-Hogan's side-board, and a subtle aroma seems to float from the fragile china tea-cup that "tells" its own sweet story of "ye olden days"?

gnd
1

Chapter ~~X~~ II.

Glimpses Through The Horse - Shoe Chimney.

A weather-worn house "perched up aloft" on the hill-top! Built in 1686 when Nantucket's commercial, industrial and social history was yet in embryo. Built so substantially and "upon honor" (as they build in those days) that it has withstood the storms, the gales and the tempests of two centuries and nearly two decades more; and is yet good for ^{many} years to come as a respectable *ci-devant*. Known now as "The Oldse House" on the island, also as the "Gethro Coffin" and "Horse Shoe House", it is an object of interest to strangers

and residents; and is visited annually by large numbers of sightseers in quest of antiquarian tid-bits. The old wooden shutters creak on their hinges as they creaked in the "crazy Son'-Westers" of two centuries ago; while the same salt-laden breezes sweep over the billowy oat-fields and come back freighted with the perfume of the new-mown hay in the meadow-lots. The skies are full of glorious cloud effects; and the songs of the birds and the choruses of the early crickets keep the wind-knife air constantly filled with music. And such bird-songs, unmingled with any jargon of the street! And no human note of discord to mar the symphony! Every day the meadow-larks give "open air concerts"; while the swallows, with

a rhythmical whirr of wings, are almost tempted to fly through my open door-way. While listening to my favorite meadow-lark, in his yellow vest with its black pectoral crescent, I am almost inclined to become a Pythagorean and to believe in the ancient dogma of human souls inhabiting after death the bodies of animals and birds. Why may not the meadow-lark embody the soul of Mohammed? Certainly he upholds the crescent and carries it from land to land. Surely he sings his little notes that Allah has given him and can we say that he is not "his prophet"?

There are associations connected with an old house like this that render it worthy of reverent tread. Visions come to me here -

of the fair young faces that
 once looked out-through the
 tiny window-panes; especially
 that-of the youthful bride, as she
 shyly glanced through the one row
 of panes called "the Indian peep-
 hole" at the side of the door, be-
 fore answering the knock of the
 chance caller in those by-gone
 days. As I notice the inroads
 which time has made upon the
 walls, where the plaster has dropped
 away in patches, and the laths
 have slipped from their places,
 I am moved to tenderness of
 feeling, such as a very aged
 person ought-to inspire when
 we see, and yet for very sympathy
 feign not to see, the thinning
 hair, the drooping, trembling form,
 and eyes over which the film of

years is gathering. A most deplorable incident of summer inspection of an old house is the thoughtless writing of autographs upon the walls; unless anticipated by the constant vigilance of the attendant. About as senseless a practice as it would be in calling upon the "oldest inhabitant" to scribble one's name upon the dear old lady's apron strings when she was off her guard; imagining thus to electrify future callers with the fact of one's having made a previous visit.

If this old house could speak it would tell me many a tale of the good old times when the building — as well as the hearts within — was fresh and trim and fair. When the latch-string of welcome hung out; and true

Hospitality of the heart reigned supreme. The young couple commenced their house-keeping there with no pomp; no retinue; but they came into possession, at the start, of good health, good looks, and good principles; and industry would certainly do the rest.

Like their own hay-fields, fresh and sweet,
Life opened up its fallow meads".

There is a certain board in the floor to-day that, as I step over it, gives back a little note of weird sweetness beneath my tread.

Longfellow has written of the creaking hinges of an old door being the cries of imprisoned souls in Purgatory, wailing to be set free. But in contrast to the unhappy Purgatorial ghost,

I am reminded, whenever I step upon this resonant board, of the blessed union of fond hearts; and this little weird note seems like a musical echo of a happy marital relation. Violin makers go wild over wood taken from old houses as stock for violins. If a fortunate maker could secure this board of my discovery he might fashion an instrument that would rival in tone a famous Cremona.

Visitors here are interested in an old Nantucket sleigh which stands in one corner of the room, a relic of bygone merriment and pleasure. It is one hundred and twenty-five years old; and though it did not have the good fortune to skim over the snow with our fair young bride

for occupant, it has doubtless carried many a load of her laughing descendants who made merry in those days with the same buoyancy of youth as is the fashion of to-day in more stylish and costly turnouts. A gentleman tourist lately informed me that a sleigh exactly after this pattern may be seen to-day in Russia; a relic of a ride therein which the first Czar of Russia took from Moscow to St. Petersburg; showing that our typical old-time Nantucket sleigh is of Russian design.

There are possibilities of endless threads of reverie in an ancient house like this, if one have but the magic wand to summon them. Catholic priests and the Catholic Sisterhoods have stated times

in the year which they set apart for "going on retreats", as they call them, for religious meditation. Surely this Sunset Hill retreat of mine is conducive of all kinds of meditation — religious, fanciful and dreamful.

Standing quietly alone on the time-worn hearth, and in the cavernous space of this great open fire-place, on a warm summer afternoon, and looking with awesome face, up and up, and still up, the smoke-lined blue of the "Horse-shoe Chimney" of the "Oldest House" what do I see save the rectangular opening set like a frame for the patch of blue sky which glimmers down upon me its azure mystery? I catch glimpses of other scenes in that bit of

blue sky above me. Do I see
 them or is it the sensitive
 "dry films" of my imagination taking
 "snap shots" for future "developing"
 as I shall sit in the ancient fiddle-
 back chair in the ingle-nook? Ques-
 tion me not too practically, but
 here are a few of the glimpses,
 floating down to me through the
 telescopic eye of the now smoke-
 less chimney. I see first of all,
 like a vision in a cloud-mist,
 the sweet young face of the bride
 of fifteen — Mary Gardner —
 for whom the house was built
 as a wedding gift. I see her in
 her simple, bridal array, standing
 in the "best-room" to receive
 her guests as they come with
 gentle, sincere hand-claps
 to wish her joy, and to admire

Old House

her new house, which was then the "talk of the town". Beside her stands her young husband — Jethro Coffin — who has inherited from his grand-father Tristram those sturdy elements of character which still thread in and out through our various webs of Nantucket genealogy. Quietly and most tentatively they began their housekeeping up there on the hill-top. Sunset Hill it was for old John Gardner and Peter Coffin who had built and furnished the substantial oak-timbered structure; but Sunrise Hill it also was for the young couple in the bright-dawn of their love-life. No superfluous finery here — no "modern conveniences" — the dry

pink was not only guiltless of any sanitary "ball trap", but was without so much as a suspicion of any outlet for the waste water. There were no "pet tubs" of soap-stone; no polished tessellated floors; no electric bell on the floor under the dining-room table, by which my lady's clippared foot could noiselessly summon the maid to change the courses; none of the senseless and vexatious conventionalities of the year 1900. fretted the nerves and wrinkled the fair brow of this dear little bride of 1686. But she was happy here! Oh I know she was happy, though the conveniences and luxuries were few, though she "did her own work", and with the most primitive cooking

utensils. Ah but they had been appetites in those days that needed no coaxing — appetites which come of sturdy work and right-living — and many a savory odor of roasting meat was wafted up this spacious chimney as Mary's shapely hands turned the crank of the old roasting-spit, still here in the house to-day. Temptingly tender also, and of the right-golden hue, were the meal-cakes or "bannocks" baked in this old "tin oven". And think of the work involved! For the meal had to be first pounded from the corn in this home-wrought, hoop-bound mortar — no mills being then upon the island for grinding corn. The pestle that did the pounding is of solid

stone, and a heavy weight for delicate hands of fifteen. But it was "Fore'a Labor", and therefore not "lost"!

Wreaths of smoke have gone up from this chimney which told of good cheer and hospitality within. Cherry-makings, "candy frolics", and family gatherings have been there. Children's innocent voices have prattled and shouted in the sunny nest chamber. On winter nights the great back-logs have crackled lustily and sent a shower of sparks up the hungry flue. It is a long, long way to look back, even as now I look up to the distant patch of blue sky outside the chimney's sooty mouth; ^{a sweet blue eye looking down upon me} and as I step out from the ample hearth to

the stillness of the vacant rooms,
there comes to me a verse of the

old song — slightly paraphrased: —

Gone on the hill-top,

The old house stands,

Where fathers and mothers once dwelt.

With the old door-latch

That was worn by their hands,

Near the church where in prayer they knelt.

Years, years have fled since that happy time,

But the ocean's still rolling along;

And the birds, and the bees,

The blossoms, the trees,

Keep ringing the same old song.

Chapter ~~III~~.

IV.

An Idyl of The Sea.

(A true incident.)

Far out at sea, an island, lone,
 Whose shores the tumbling breakers bound,
 Nantucket isle, with placid brow,
 Smiles o'er the waters of the sound.
 Peaceful the air above her head;
 Peaceful the wavelets at her feet;
 While myriad shells, with pearly lips,
 This tale of answered prayers repeat.

More than a hundred years ago —
 Old records can the date recall —
 Throughout the town a deadly fear
 Crept to the heart of one and all;
 For just without the harbor bars,
 Where moaned the tide with stifled breath,
 There lay at forced anchorage
 A British frigate armed with death.

In vain the people planned defence,
 No bulwarks^{ru} walled the Quaker town,
 No battlements, no ancient keep,
 No strength to beat invaders down.
 They saw the captain's stern command
 To "man the boats", and well they knew
 No mercy for their hearths and homes
 Would harbor with the hostile crew.

But stay! A passing gleam of hope!
 The wind was blowing from the shore;
 All safe until its breath should change;
 No landing for the boats, before.
 Then from each sad and anxious heart,
 From hoary sire, and maiden fair,
 There rose, unchecked by form of words,
 An earnest burst of robbing prayer.

A prayer to Him who rules the winds,
 And holds the waters in His hand,
 To save them in their island home,
 And keep the wind from off the land.
 And then from Heaven the answer came;
 The gale, unchanging, day by day,
 Swept out to sea defiantly
 And held the dreaded foe at bay.

For weeks the howling monster lay
 Without the port, with evil eye;
 But never once a change of wind;
 And never once a change of sky.
 Grown tired at length of power denied,
 And hopeless watching of the prey,
 With muttered curse it raised the siege,
 And from the harbor sailed away.

And ever since, the loving tides
Have swept the coast with laughing song;
And ever since, the fruitful years
With joy and peace have rolled along.
And He who gave the wind its course,
Who saved this lone, unguarded strand,
Still watches o'er the sunny isle,
And holds it in His loving hand.